

GIANT-SIZE
DEFENDERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

ALL AGES
APPROVED
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68 BIG PAGES

GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS

FEATURING THE STAR-STUDDED RETURN OF
THE MAN CALLED
YELLOWJACKET!

PUNY HUMANS KILLED
NIGHTHAWK!

NOW WE
WILL KILL
YOU!

NEW!!
ONCE MORE...THE
SQUADRON SINISTER!

Steve Lee
PRESENTS:

THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS!

TOO COLD A NIGHT FOR DYING!

"FOR SEVERAL WEEKS NOW, KYLE RICHMOND-- MILLIONAIRE, JET-SETTER, ALLEGED BEAUTIFUL PERSON--HAS BEEN SEEN EXCLUSIVELY IN THE COMPANY OF MODEL TRISH STARR, TOUTED BY THOSE WHO KNOW AS 'THE FACE OF 1975.' HER BODY ISN'T BAD, EITHER. DO WE HEAR WEDDING BELLS IN THEIR FUTURE? OR ONLY THE JANGLING OF SILVER?"

-- RHODA BARNETT
SYNDICATED TV
GOSSIP-MONGER

NEW YORK'S
LINCOLN
CENTER
FOR THE
PERFORMING
ARTS--
JANUARY 4, 1975.

TONIGHT'S CONCERT
WAS ONLY FAIR, THE
REAL ATTRACTION,
AT LEAST FOR THE
PRESS, WAS THE
CELEBRITIES IN THE
AUDIENCE.

HOW 'BOUT IT,
MR. RICHMOND,
MISS STARR...
ANY TRUTH
TO THOSE
RUMORS?

STEVE GERBER / DON HECK / VINCE COLLETTA / DAVID HUNT, LETTERER / LEN WEIN
WRITER ARTIST INKER PETRA GOLDBERG, COLORIST EDITOR

WHY DON'T YOU ASK RHODA? I
THINK SHE KNOWS MORE ABOUT
MY LIFE THAN I DO!

SHE
THINKS
SO, TOO.

THAT'S WHY
WE'RE GOING
STRAIGHT TO
THE SOURCE.

I WAS. AFTER ALL, CAN YOU MEN
IMAGINE ME MARRIED TO A HIPPIE
WHO INTENDS TO GIVE UP MODEL-
LING AS SOON AS SHE HAS THE
FUNDS TO OPEN AN ARTISTS'
COMMUNE UPSTATE?

IS THAT FOR
REAL? WE
HEARD SHE
PAINTED AND
PLAYED A
COUPLE OF
INSTRUMENTS,
BUT--!

YOU MAY AS WELL FACE IT, MR. RICHMOND!
YOU'RE NEWS, AND TRISH'S AGENT WOULDN'T
HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY.

THEN
LET ME GO ON
RECORD AS STATING
THAT I DON'T HEAR
ANY WEDDING BELLS
AT THIS POINT IN
TIME-- ONLY A
COLD, HOWLING
WIND.

SPEAK FOR
YOURSELF,
KYLE.

FAR OUT, KYLE.
MY LITTLE CON-
SCIOUSNESS RAIS-
ING PROGRAM
IS FINALLY
SINKING IN.

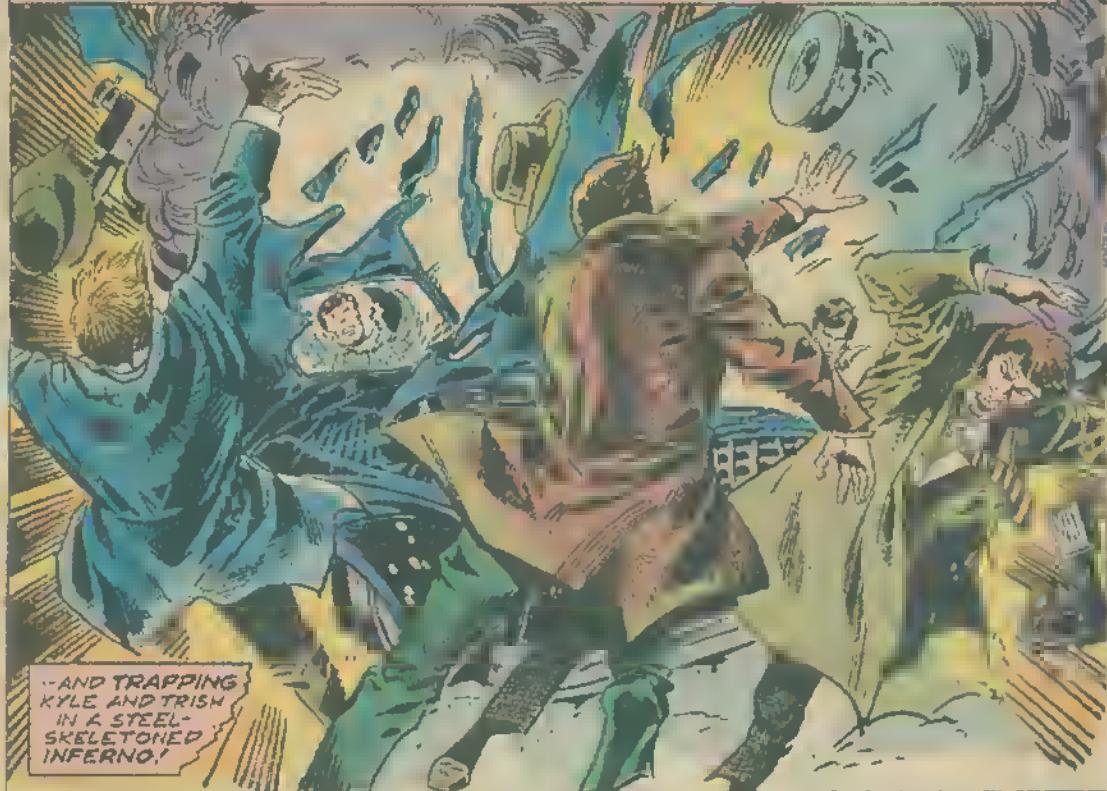
HOW COME YOU'RE DRIVING
YOURSELF, MR. RICHMOND?
PENNYWORTH CUT YOUR
ALLOWANCE-- TAKE AWAY
YOUR CHAUFFEUR?

NOTHING
OF THE
KIND.

I'M SIMPLY LEARNING TO
TAKE CARE OF MYSELF
THESE DAYS. AND NOW, IF
YOU DON'T MIND, FOLKS
... IT'S TIME I TOOK THE
LADY HOME.

THAT SAID, KYLE ROLLS
UP THE WINDOW, PLACES
THE KEY IN THE IGNITION,
GIVES IT A QUICK TWIST...

...AND SUDDENLY THE PALE WHITE NIGHT Erupts in Crimson and Amber Frenzy. A bomb, wired to the ignition switch, blows the engine of Kyle's auto to bits, battering the newsmen with jagged shards of red-hot metal, hurling them to the ground...

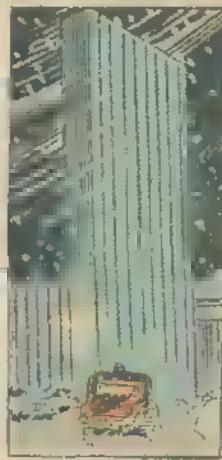


SIRENS WAILING, TIRES SKIDDING WILDLY ON THE ICE GLAZED, SNOW-PACKED PAVEMENT, EMERGENCY VEHICLES RACE UP BROADWAY TO THE SITE OF THE DISASTER.

MEDICS, FIREFIGHTERS, POLICE... BRAVING THE PERILOUS STREETS, RISKING THEIR OWN LIVES IN AN ATTEMPT TO SAVE OTHERS!



A WEST SIDE HOSPITAL, NOT HALF AN HOUR LATER.



TWO VISITORS ARRIVE, HAVING BEEN APPRISED BY TELEPHONE OF KYLE RICHMOND'S MISFORTUNE. THEIR EXPRESSIONS, NATURALLY, ARE GRIM - SOBER, BUT ASIDE FROM THAT, THEY SEEM NOT AT ALL UNUSUAL.



... THAT THEY ARE DR. STRANGE, MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS, AND THE WOMAN WARRIOR CALLED VALKYRIE!



-- IN O.R. FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL HOURS, NURSE, CALL MY WIFE, AND--

STEPHEN!
IS THAT
YOU?!



WHO--? JAMES WYNTER! IT'S BEEN YEARS--!

VAL, YOU ARE LOOKING AT ONE OF THE FINEST SURGEONS IN NEW YORK. HE--



DON'T I KNOW IT? HE'S MY PATIENT, STEPHEN.

I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED. WE BOTH MOVED IN THOSE SOCIAL CIRCLES BEFORE... MY ACCIDENT. HOW IS HE, JAMES?

NOT GOOD, I'M AFRAID.



HE'S BEING PREPPED FOR SURGERY-- AND I'M ON MY WAY TO THE O.R. NOW. I COULD USE YOUR HELP ON THIS ONE, STEPHEN.



MY HELP? BUT YOU KNOW ABOUT MY ACCIDENT, JAMES. MY HANDS ARE NO LONGER STEADY ENOUGH...



SCRUBBING UP: THE SMELL OF ANTISEPTICS... THE METALLIC POUNDING OF PUSHING WATER AGAINST GLEAMING STAINLESS STEEL... THE GRIM REALIZATION THAT A HUMAN LIFE WAITS IN THE ADJOINING ROOM TO BE SAVED...!

THOROUGHLY INEVITABLE... THAT HE SOMEHOW CONSIDERS THIS MORE U... THAN THE SALVATION OF A COSMOS.



ODD... THAT A MAN WHO HAS SAVED WHOLE UNIVERSES SHOULD TREMBLE AT THE THOUGHT.



HE HAS HEARD THE UNIVERSE SPEAK TO HIM, FELT IT TOUCH HIM... HE HAS LEARNED TO REGARD HIMSELF AS A KIND OF ANTIBODY IN THE COSMIC FLOW... AND YET...



THE WORK PROCEEDS... BUT SLOWLY... TOO SLOWLY... HOURS DRAG ON... HOURS IN WHICH HE COULD BE SUMMONING TOGETHER THE OTHER DEFENDERS TO SEARCH OUT THE PERPETRATORS OF THE

BUT WOULD THEY ANSWER HIS SUMMONS?... THE "TEAM" WAS FORMED TO SAVE WORLDS, NOT TO AVENGE ONE MAN... THE HULK WOULD ANSWER... "BIRD-NOSE IS HULK'S FRIEND!"... YEAH, THE HULK...

DID YOU HEAR ME? I ASKED ABOUT THIS... STEPHEN IS ANYTHING WRONG? YOU LOOK A TRIFLE PALE, MAYBE YOU'D BETTER GO...?

NO, THE STRAIN GOT TO ME FOR A MOMENT, I'LL BE FINE.



...AND EVENTUALLY, IT IS FINISHED.

I'D NEVER HAVE SUSPECTED IT. HIS CONSTITUTION IS REMARKABLE. I'D SWEAR HE HAD THE STRENGTH OF TWO MEN.

BARRING COMPLICATIONS HE SHOULD PULL THROUGH BEAUTIFULLY.

AND WHAT OF THE GIRL WHO WAS WITH HIM?

CAN'T SAY. I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO HER DOCTOR.

THEY'RE BOTH LUCKY TO BE ALIVE, THOUGH. KYLE HAD NO GAS IN THE TANK. CAN YOU IMAGINE...?

NO GAS? NONE AT ALL? JAMES, ARE YOU SURE?

THAT'S WHAT THE POLICE SAID.

AND IT DIDN'T STRIKE YOU AS... CURIOUS?

I SUPPOSE, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I-- GOOD LORD!

STEPHEN... THANK HEAVEN! HE CAME CRASHING THROUGH THE WALL!...

AT LAST! MAGICIAN WILL TAKE HULK TO BIRD-NOSE.

HULK WANTS TO SEE FRIEND! SICK!



HULK WILL CRUSH DUMB DOCTOR. IF NOBODY TAKES HULK TO SICK BIRD-NOSE!

NO, MY FRIEND... HE WILL LIVE... THANKS TO DR. WYNTER.

WHAT? WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

BIRD-NOSE IS NOT...?

DOCTOR HELP HULK'S FRIEND? THEN DOCTOR IS FRIEND TOO!

EXACTLY, HULK.
NOW, PLEASE, CALM
YOURSELF.

JAMES... I THINK
I'D BEST BE ON MY
WAY... ALONG
WITH YOUR NEW
FRIEND.

TH-THAT'S
FINE WITH ME
...BUT THE
WALL, WHO'LL
PAY FOR THE
WALL?

I'LL SEE THAT
IT'S TAKEN CARE OF.
HAVE NO FEAR.

...TOWARD THE GREENWICH VILLAGE SANCTUM
SANCTORIUM OF DR. STRANGE.

HULK KNOW
FROM MAGICIAN!
MAGICIAN'S VOICE
IN HULK'S HEAD
TOLD HULK TO
COME HERE!

AND
SUDDENLY,
THE BIZARRE
TRUTH DAWNS
ON THE MYSTIC
HULK.

THEN, AS WYNTER GAPES IN AMAZEMENT, THE
GREEN BEHEMOTH LEAPS BACK THROUGH THE
HOLE HE CREATED, OUT INTO THE SNOWY SKY...

HULK, I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
...HOW DO
YOU KNOW
ABOUT KYLE?

THERE WAS A MOMENT
IN THE OPERATING
ROOM WHEN I WAS
OVERCOME BY
STRAIN.

I MUST HAVE LAPSED
INTO A TRANCE-LIKE
STATE... WHILE HULK
AND THE OTHER DEFEN-
DERS WERE ON MY MIND,
I SUMMONED HIM
WITHOUT EVEN
KNOWING IT!

BUT
COME IN FROM
THE COLD, THERE'S
ANOTHER MYSTERY
TO BE DEALT WITH.

IT IS NOW TWO A.M., AND IN THEIR HOME IN SNOWBOUND SUBURBAN SOUTHAMPTON, BIOCHEMIST HENRY PYM AND WIFE JANET STARE BLANK-EYED AT THE TUBE.

DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, LOVER...BUT I'M READY FOR BED.

COMING? OR WOULD YOU RATHER CATCH THE LATE-LATE MOVIES?

"ZOMBIE IN A GIRL'S DORMITORY"? ARE YOU KIDDING?

I'LL BE ALONG AS SOON AS THE NEWS IS OVER.

...BIZARRE BOMBING ON BROADWAY LATE SATURDAY NIGHT.

INJURED IN THE BLAST WERE MILLIONAIRE KYLE RICHMOND AND WELL-KNOWN FASHION MODEL TRISH STARR, SEEN IN THIS PHOTO TAKEN JUST BEFORE THE TRAGEDY.

TRIXIE!

BOTH ARE REPORTED IN SERIOUS CONDITION AT MANHATTAN'S ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL. POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING, BUT...

YOU KNOW THAT GIRL?

YOU MIGHT SAY THAT I OWE HER MY LIFE. MONTHS BACK WHEN I WAS TRAPPED AT ANT-MAN SIZE... SHE SAVED ME FROM A BULLET FIRED BY HER UNCLE...

...WHO JUST HAPPENED TO BE EGGHEAD!

*SEE MARVEL FEATURE #5--LEN.

NOT ONLY THAT SHE HELPED DESTROY ALL HIS PRIZED SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT, I THOUGHT HE'D DIED IN THE FIRE THAT FOLLOWED,

LOOKS LIKE I WAS MIS-TAKEN.

YOU THINK EGGHEAD PLANTED THAT BOMB?

DOES THIS MEAN THAT WE'RE GOING BACK INTO ACTION--AS ANT-MAN AND THE WASP?

NOT WE? JAN--ME. THIS IS A PERSONAL FIGHT.

NOW WAIT JUST A
MINUTE, MISTER
PYM! WE'RE A
TEAM, REMEMBER?
WHERE YOU GO
--I GO!

NOT THIS TIME, JAN.
I'M ASKING YOU
TO RESPECT MY
WISHES. I WANT TO
TACKLE EGGHEAD
ALONE.

AND NOT AS ANT-MAN. I'VE BEEN WORKING
ON SOME NEW GADGETS LATELY...

...AND THEY SEEM
MORE SUITED TO
ANOTHER OF
MY COSTUMED
IDENTITIES.

JAN CONTINUES TO PROTEST, BUT HANK
STANDS FIRM: "HE'S MY ENEMY, NOT YOURS
--AND YOU'VE NEVER EVEN MET TRIXIE. I
OWE HER THIS, JAN, AND WHAT I OWE EGG-
HEAD--YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SEE."

HIS VOICE IS CALM-- ALMOST TOO
CALM. BUT JAN CAN SENSE THE
RAGE BEHIND THE WORDS, AND
SHE RELENTS.

THE SNOWSTORM,
HOWEVER, IS NOT SO KIND.
THE BRITTLE WIND STILL
WHIPS THROUGH THE COLD
CANYONS OF CONCRETE...
TO THE GRIMIEST DEPTHS
OF THOSE CANYONS.

THE BOWERY:
HUMANITY'S
BOTTOM LINE,
WHERE A BED
FOR THE
NIGHT IS
NOW UP
TO FIFTY
CENTS.

WELL, WELL
...LOOK WHO'S
BACK.

BE SILENT YOU
PIGS! MY VICTORY
WILL COME-- IN
TIME.

"OUR KIND"
HE sez!
WHAT'RE YOU,
FATS-- SOME
KINDA ARIS-
TOCRAT?

COULDN'T
CONQUER
THE WORLD
TONIGHT?

AND
WHEN IT DOES
--YOUR KIND WILL
BE ELIMINATED
FIRST.

SURE!
HE'S JUST
SLUMMIN'
TONIGHT!

SLUMMING? DO YOU THINK
I'D WILLINGLY CONSORT
WITH THE LIKES OF YOU?
YOU'RE ALL FOOLS,
THEN!

FOOLS
AS WELL
AS TRASH!

YA XIN CALL US
ALL THE NAMES YA
WANT, BUDDY.

...BUT
WE DON'T LIKE
PEOPLE HITTIN'
OUR FRIENDS.

'LESS, O' COURSE, THEY
DON'T MIND GETTIN'
SLUGGED BACK!

HEY, WHADDAYA DOIN'?
LET TH' BUM ALONUNNGH!

YOU DEFENDIN'
THE CREEP,
BUDDY?

ONE BLOW STRUCK...
THAT'S ALL IT TAKES...

I DIDN'T
SAY NUTHIN'!
LEMME GO!

...TO SPARK A BRAWL AMONG THESE MEN WHO
HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO THAN FIGHT.

BUT THE HOUR IS LATE.
THE COMBATANTS, TIRED. THE
SLUGFEST DOESN'T LAST LONG.

THIS IS THE JERK
WHAT STARTED IT!
GET RID O' HIM--

--AN' WE
KIN GET
SOME SHUT-
EYE!

BEAT IT,
FATS! AN' DON'T
COME BACK!

YOU
CAN'T DO
THIS! I'VE
PAID
FOR MY
BED!

SWEENEY! YOU'LL ONE THE NIGHT!
PROMISE YOU! I AM THE GREATEST
SCIENTIFIC INTELLECT ON THE
FACE OF THIS PLANET! I SWEAR
I AM!

TOUGH
SPIT! YA AINT
WELCOME
HERE!

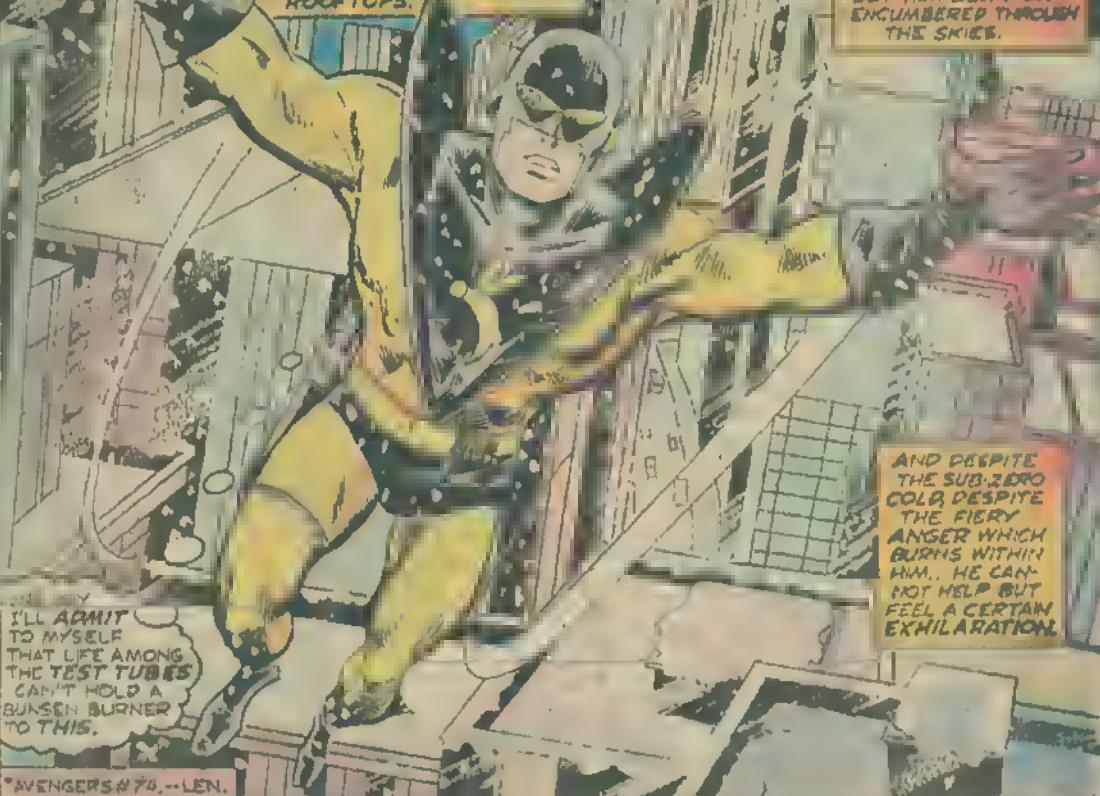
I... AM...
EGSHED.

CHAPTER
TWO

FLIGHT OF THE YELLOWJACKET!

THE RAW, PIERCING WIND BLOWS IN BITTER-COLD GUSTS, BUFFETING THE FLYING FORM OF HENRY PYM - YELLOWJACKET - AS HE SWOOPS DOWN OVER THE SNOW-BLANKETED MANHATTAN ROOFTOPS.

FOUR YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE LAST HE DONned THIS COAT-OF-BLACK AND GOLD... SINCE LAST ITS WING APPARATUS LET HIM SOAR UNENCUMBERED THROUGH THE SKIES.



*AVENGERS #70 -- LEN.

I REMEMBER THOR USED TO CALL HIMSELF "A WARRIOR BORN." I CAN'T GO THAT FAR, AND YET... WAIT, WHAT'S THIS?

SUDDENLY, THE THRILL IS GONE, REPLACED BY STARK FEAR FOR TRISH STARR'S LIFE.



NURSE, WHAT HAPPENED HERE? IS TRIKIE STARR ON THIS FLOOR? IS SHE SAFE? BLAST IT--STOP STARING AND ANSWER ME!!

TREMBLING, THE NURSE TELLS HER TALE...AND WHEN SHE IS DONE, IT IS YELLOWJACKET'S TURN TO BE STARTLED.

SHE DESCRIBES DR. STRANGE, EXPLAINS THAT HE ASSISTED IN AN OPERATION...BUT YELLOWJACKET'S FEARS ARE ONLY PARTIALLY ALLAYED.

PLEASE! I WON'T HURT YOU!

THE HULK HERE WITH A DOCTOR...?

I CAN'T SEE THE CONNECTION YET...BUT THERE MUST BE SOMETHING...!

TRIXIE'S ROOM--WHERE IS IT?

THIS "DOCTOR" WAS FAT... BALD... WAS HE?

NO... NOTHING LIKE THAT.

AROUND THE CORNER--ROOM 663--BUT YOU CAN'T--

WAIT! NO ONE'S ALLOWED--SHE CAN'T HAVE VISITORS--NOT 'TIL MORNING!

STOP! THE REGULATIONS YOU MUSTN'T--

I'M SORRY MISS--THIS TIME THE RULES GET BROKEN! IF YOU UNDERSTOOD THE URGENCY OF THIS--!

THERE'S NO TELLING WHEN OR HOW THAT MAD-MAN WILL STRIKE AGAIN!

THE NURSE RACES AFTER HIM, ONLY A FEW STEPS BEHIND...BUT WHEN SHE ROUNDS THE CORNER...

OOH! WHERE DID HE GO? I DIDN'T HEAR A DOOR OPEN...

BUT HE'S VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE!

OR SO IT SEEMS. BUT HAD SHE LOOKED MORE CLOSELY...AT THE MEDICINE CART...!

ROO HOS
Rx PONDEx
240M
TAKE 4H

HAVE TO MOVE FAST. SHE'LL BE BACK IN A MOMENT... AND NOT ALONE, BUT AT THIS SIZE--

I CAN SLIP INTO TRIXIE'S ROOM THROUGH THE CRACK UNDER THE DOOR.

BUT I CAN'T REMAIN AT INSECT HEIGHT FOR LONG ANYMORE.

MY BLOOD STILL CONTAINS TRACES OF THE MICROBE THAT TRAPPED ME AT THAT SIZE...AND I CAN'T RISK ACTIVATING IT AGAIN. HAVE TO USE THE CYBERNETIC SIZE-CHANGING CIRCUITRY IN MY COWL... JUDICIOUSLY.



WH-WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? GET OUT OF HERE! DON'T TAKE ANOTHER STEP, OR I'LL...



THAT VOICE... HENRY PYM! IS IT REALLY YOU... HENRY...?

HE NODS... THE NURSE STEPS ASIDE... HE DRAWS CLOSER... AND SEE'S THE TERRIBLE PAIN ETCHED ON TRISH'S FACE...



TRIXIE... WHAT DO THE DOCTORS SAY? ARE YOU GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT?

OH, HANK... THEY DON'T KNOW... MY ARM... THE LEFT ONE... THEY MAY HAVE TO...

OH, MY GOD...!

THEY WON'T KNOW... 'TIL MORNING, HANK, I'M SO SCARED...!

TRIXIE, YOU AND I BOTH KNOW WHO DID THIS TO YOU. WHERE IS HE? I'M NOT GOING TO LET HIM GET AWAY WITH IT.

HE... WE RUINED THE LAST OF HIS EVIL MACHINES... HE HAD NO... NO MONEY... HE CALLED ME... WEEKS AGO...

...FROM THE BOWERY... LAST DIME, HE SAID...

AND YOU REFUSED TO LOAN HIM ANYTHING BECAUSE YOU KNEW HOW HE'D PUT IT TO USE.

YES...

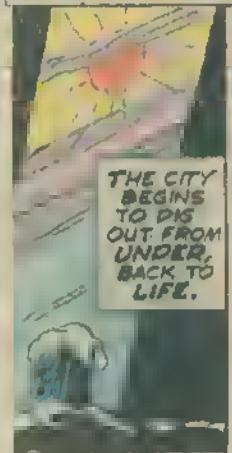
HANK PYM STEPS SLOWLY AWAY FROM THE BED... AND, MUTE WITH ANGER, SILENTLY SHAKES HIS FIST AT THE SKY. EVEN WITHOUT SPEAKING...



HE KISSES TRISH SOFTLY ON THE FORE-
HEAD... APOLOGIZES TO HER NURSE FOR
THE FRIGHT HE GAVE HER... STRIDES TO
THE WINDOW, OPENS IT... AND LAUNCHES
HIMSELF OUT INTO THE BLEAK NIGHT.



BY DAWN, ALMOST
FOUR HOURS LATER,
THE SNOW HAS
STOPPED FALLING.



DON'T BE SO
MODEST FOR
ONCE. IT'S A
MIRACLE I'M
STILL AROUND.

IT'S AN EVEN
GREATER MIRACLE
STEPHEN WAS ABLE
TO CONVINCE THE
HULK TO WAIT
OUTSIDE WHILE
WE CAME TO
VISIT 'SICK
BIRD-NOSE.'



KYLE, IF I MAY BE SERIOUS
FOR A MOMENT...
HAVE YOU ANY NOTION
WHO MAY HAVE
PLANTED THE BOMB?



THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY
ISN'T THERE? KYLE RICHMOND
HAS NO REAL ENEMIES, BUT
NIGHTHAWK DOES-- THE
SQUADRON SINISTER. IT'S
KIND OF A WEIRD WAY FOR
THEM TO ATTACK, BUT WHO
ELSE IS THERE?



NO ONE... WHO KNOWS
YOUR REAL IDENTITY.
IT MUST BE TRUE.
THEY'VE RETURNED
FROM THE DEAD
SOMEHOW.

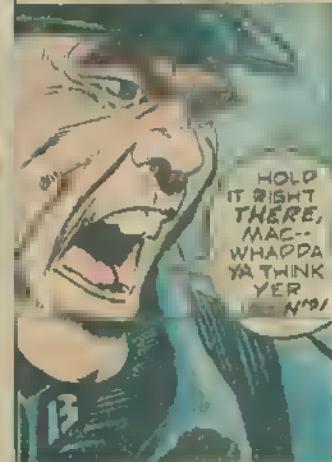
AND THEY
CRAVE VEN-
GEANCE FOR
YOUR
DEFECTION
FROM THEIR
RANKS.

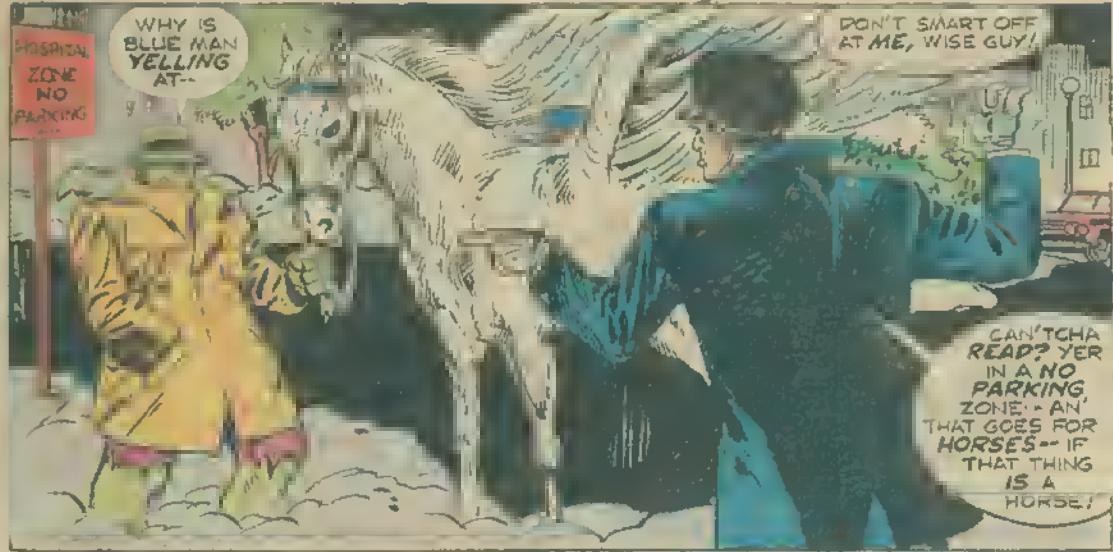


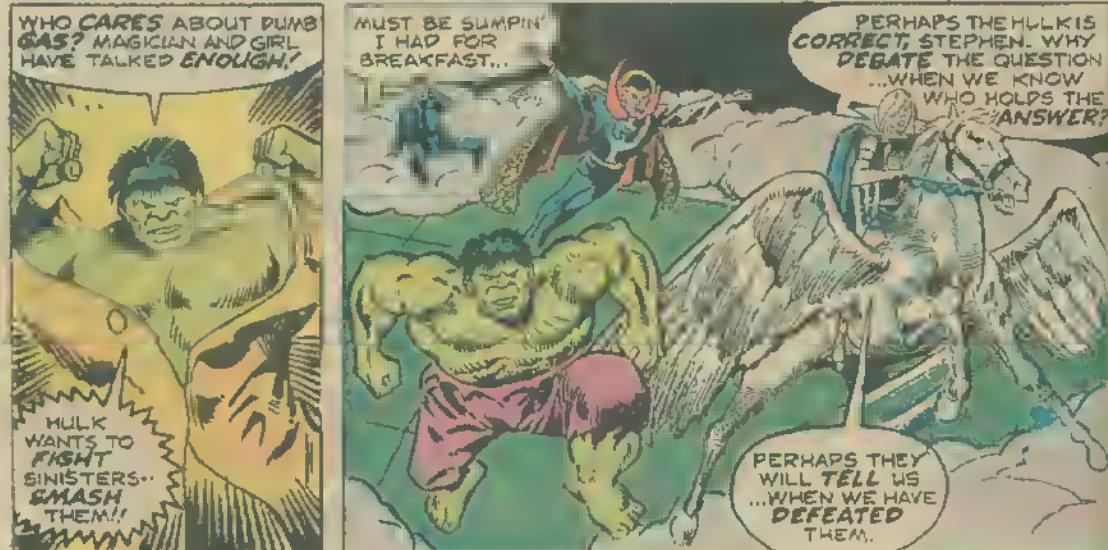
AND WHEN KYLE
HAS INFORMED
THEM OF HIS
ERSTWHILE
TEAMMATE'S
LAST HEAD-
QUARTERS...



NOR DO THE BLUE-CLAD
MEMBERS OF NEW YORK'S
FINEST, OUTSIDE THE
HOSPITAL!







LOWER MANHATTAN: A GRIM AND VERY FATIGUED YELLOWJACKET PAUSES ON A ROOFTOP AFTER A SEVEN HOUR SEARCH THAT HAS TURNED UP NO TRACE OF HIS HATED ARCH-FOE.

MUST'VE CHECKED A HUNDRED FLOPHOUSES... AND I CAN'T EVEN COUNT THE POOR WAYS...!

IF ANYONE HAS SEEN EGGHEAD... THEY'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT IT.

I SHOULD'VE FIGURED ON THIS. AN EX-AVENGER IS JUST AN' OTHER COP DOWN HERE... AND TOO MANY OF THESE MEN HAVE TOO MUCH OF THEIR OWN DIRTY LINEN TO HIDE.

I'M DEAD TIRED... BUT I'LL MAKE ONE LAST SWEEP OF THE AREA BEFORE --EH?!

ON THE SIDEWALK BELOW ME-- CAN IT BE?

IT'S HIM!! I'D KNOW THAT POINTY HEAD ANYWHERE!

--THE CONFRONTATION.

EGGHEAD, YOU'VE GOT TWO SECONDS TO CONVince ME I SHOULdn't SHOVE YOU SIDEWAYS DOWN A SEWER! START TALKING!

PYM!

THAT'S RIGHT. NOT A THING. BUT YOU PLANTED THAT BOMB IN KYLE RICHMOND'S CAR. DONT YOU? YOU TRIED TO KILL YOUR OWN NIECE, DIDN'T YOU?



BUT I NEVER MEANT TO KILL HER--ONLY MAIM HER.

"ONLY MAIN HER?"
ONLY?!"

OF ALL THE COLD-BLOODED, INHUMAN, MONSTROUS...WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL ARE YOU?!"

PANIC-STRICKEN EGGHEAD STEPS BACKWARD...ONTO A PATCH OF ICE...

...AND BEFORE Y.J. CAN EVEN THROW A PUNCH, HIS FOE LANDS HARD ON THE PAVEMENT.

ON YOUR FEET! NOW! GET UP! GET UP!!

MY HEART BLEEDS! YOUR NIECE SPENT HER NIGHT IN A HOSPITAL BED—WONDER—WHETHER OR NOT SHE'D LOSE AN ARM IN THE MORNING!

AND BE THANKFUL...I WON'T DO MORE THAN BLOODY YOUR FACE!

PLEASE...NO...I'VE SPENT ALL NIGHT OUT...IN THE COLD...I'M TIRED...

GET UP!!

YEAH, BE THANKFUL...THAT I CAN STILL REMEMBER YOU'RE HUMAN.

BECAUSE, MAN, I HAVE MET ANTS WHO WALKED TALLER.

DON'T CRAWL AWAY...I'LL GET THE POLICE.

A SHORT TIME LATER, HENRY PYM GAZES SORROWFULLY ON A HEAVILY-SEATED TRISH STARR...AND TRIES IN VAIN TO FIGHT BACK A TEAR FROM HIS EYE.

SHE LOST THE ARM. THERE WAS NOTHING WE COULD DO.

WHAT A PITY. SHE DIDN'T DESERVE THIS.

BEFORE SHE WENT INTO SURGERY, SHE ASKED THAT YOU LOOK IN ON MR. RICHMOND, LET HIM KNOW SHE WAS ALL RIGHT.

WERE THOSE ACTUALLY THE WORDS SHE USED, DOCTOR? I'M TO TELL HIM SHE'S "ALL RIGHT?"

THE DOCTOR SIGHS... CLOSES HIS EYES... AND NODS, AND YELLOWJACKET DEPARTS FOR KYLE'S ROOM.

BUT WILL SHE ACCEPT THE IDEA OF THE LOSS... SHE AWAKENS--AND HER LEFT ARM ISN'T THERE?

HER INTELLECT WON'T HELP HER DEAL WITH THAT. IT'S PURELY AN EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT.



HELLO? WHO... YELLOWJACKET?! WHAT ON EARTH...?

I'M FLATTERED YOU RECALL THE NAME. I'VE BEEN OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT FOR QUITE AWHILE.

TRYXIE STARR ASKED ME TO SEE YOU! I'VE GOT GOOD NEWS... AND BAD.

YOU KNOW TRYSH?

ABRUPTLY, KYLE BLURTS OUT THE SECRET OF HIS NIGHTHAWK IDENTITY... AND THE DEFENDERS... AND THE MISSION THEY HAVE UNDERTAKEN... FOR NO REASON!

YOU'VE GOT TO GO AFTER THEM... STOP THEM, BEFORE...



BEFORE WHAT? EVEN IF THIS WILD STORY IS TRUE, YOUR FRIENDS ARE IN NO DANGER.

QUIETLY, HANK TELLS THE TALE OF HIS FIRST MEETING WITH TRYSH... "SHE CALLED HERSELF 'TRYXIE' THEN..." AND THEN OF HIS CONFRONTATION LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO WITH EGG-HEAD, BUT WHEN HE IS FINISHED...



YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS...!



YOU JUST TOLD ME... YOU SAW THE SQUADRON SINISTER GET BLOWN TO BITS.* THEY'RE DEAD.



YOU WIN, AND WHO NEEDS SLEEP ANYWAY? WHERE DID YOU SEND THESE "DEFENDERS?"



* IN DEFENDERS #14... LEN.

THE CRAYTON
OBSERVATORY:

I STILL CAN'T
FIGURE WHY NEBULON
WOULD WANT TO STAY
IN ZAAR--AND LIVE
AMONG THE LUD-
BERPITES!"

"ABOUT WHOM WELL LEARN
MORE IN A FUTURE
ISH. I PROMISE. --S.G.

THAT'S WHAT I MEAN,
WHIZZER! WE'VE GOT TO
HAVE A PLAN OF ATTACK--A
WAY TO USE OUR BIGGEST
ADVANTAGE, THE ELEMENT
OF SURPRISE. REMEMBER,
THE DEFENDERS PROBABLY
DON'T EVEN THINK
WE'RE ALIVE!

NOR CAN I, HYPERION
...BUT IT'S OF LITTLE
CONSEQUENCE TO US.
WHAT MATTERS NOW IS
THAT HE WAS ABLE TO
UTILIZE THEIR SCIENCE
TO TRANSPORT US
BACK TO EARTH...

...AND TO CREATE
THIS WEAPON FOR
US...THAT WE MAY
GAIN REVENGE ON
THE DEFENDERS AND
OUR TRAITOROUS
EX-COMPADE
NIGHTHAWK.

I'LL BELIEVE --
WHEN I SEE IT WORK,
SPECTRUM.

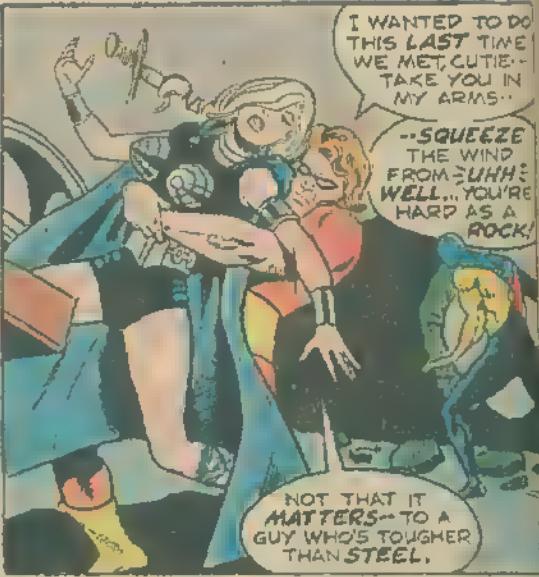
THE
WEAPON
WON'T DO
IT ALONE,
HYPERION.
WE MADE THAT
MISTAKE LAST
TIME... RELYING
ON OUTSIDE

AT THAT MOMENT,
AS IF ON CUE...

HULK
SMASH
SINISTERS!!

"WHAT IS THIS?" CRIES HYPERION. "WE HAVEN'T BEEN BACK ON EARTH A FULL HOUR YET! WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING--GIVEN ANY SIGN OF OUR RETURN! HOW DID THEY KNOW ???"





HOW LONG IT HAS BEEN SINCE HER CONSCIOUSNESS OR VALKYRIE CAN NOT DETERMINE.

INDEED, SHE IS AWARE AT FIRST ONLY OF THE DARKNESS, THE ABSENCE OF THOUGHT AND LIGHT.

THEN, SLOWLY THE EBONY CLOUD PARTS...

IMAGES SEEP IN TO FILL THE VOID... FLESH AND IRON...

THE ASGARDIAN PART OF HER RECOGNIZES THE MOTIF...

SWIRLING SHAPES... STILL FORMS... AND COLD AND DAMP, GREY STONE...

...AN IMPROVISED DUNGEON, LIKELY IN THE BASEMENT OF THE OBSERVATORY.

STEPHEN... DR. BANNER...

NO MOVEMENT, NO REPLY... BUT THEY BREATHE

THEY ARE ALIVE, AT LEAST.

BUT AS THE VALKYRIE POSSESSES THE GREATEST PHYSICAL STRENGTH OF THE TRIO, SHE IS THE FIRST TO AWAKEN...

THE FIRST TO DISCOVER THE DESPERATE QUALITY OF THEIR SITUATION: WRISTS IN SHACKLES, JAW CLAMPED SHUT, DOCTOR STRANGE CANNOT SPEAK HIS SPELLS NOR MAKE HIS MAGICAL GESTURES. DRAINED EMOTIONALLY AS WELL AS PHYSICALLY, BANNER CANNOT BECOME THE HULK... EVEN IF HE WANTED TO.

AND DESPITE HER TREMENDOUS POWER, VALKYRIE CAN NOT FREE HERSELF FROM THE BLOCK OF ADAMANTIUM ALLOY IN WHICH DR. SPECTRUM HAS ENCASED HER.



THE POSITIONING OF MY LIMBS IS SUCH... THAT I AM STRUGGLING AGAINST MYSELF. I FEAR THAT THIS TIME WE ARE TRULY...



HERE, VAL- IN MY ASTRAL FORM, WHICH NO CHAINS CAN HOLD, I SENSE A FRIENDLY PRESENCE ABOVE US.



THUS, TO ABANDON HOPE NOW WOULD BE... PREMATURE.

PARTICULARLY NOW THAT I SEE WHO IS IN OUR



YOU ARE CALLED YELLOW JACKET, I BELIEVE?



I SEE. THEN YOU'RE ONE OF THE, UM, PEOPLE I'M LOOKING FOR. YOUR PAL NIGHTHAWK SENT ME.

YOU SEE... THE FIGHT THAT TORE THIS PLACE APART WAS... UNNECESSARY.



BUT YOU CAN EXPLAIN MORE FULLY AFTER MY COMRADES AND I HAVE BEEN FREED. WE ARE IN PRISONED BELOW THIS ROOM..."



A MOMENT LATER, AN EBONY BOOT COMES CRASHING THROUGH THE WOODEN DOOR OF THE CELLAR... AND DR. STRANGE RE- ENTERS IN HIS OWN DISTINCTIVE MANNER.



YOU SEE, VAL... IT WAS NOT YET TIME TO DESPAIR.



BUT THE TIME FOR LYING DOWN IS PAST.

...AND WRAPS ITS BLOOD-RED FINGERS ABOUT KYLE RICHMOND.

BUT IF DR. SPECTRUM IS HERE-- THAT MEANS THE DEFENDERS HAVE BEEN BEATEN--MAYBE KILLED!



TOOK US A WHILE TO FIND YOU. WE CHECKED YOUR MANSION OUT ON THE ISLAND... YOUR PENTHOUSE HERE IN TOWN... AND THEN WE SAW THE PAPERS.

YOU WILL COME WITH US NOW, KYLE-- TO DIE BESIDE YOUR NEWFOUND TEAMMATES.



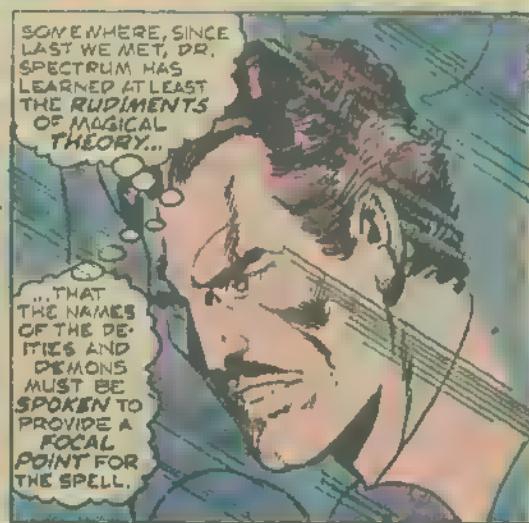
BY ALL THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOOTH --HE SHALL NOT!



AND HULK IS HERE, TOO-- AND HULK IS ANGRY!

SINISTERS PUT CHAINS ON HULK! NOW HULK WILL SQUASH THEM--





"AND THAT BIT OF KNOWLEDGE, COMBINED WITH HIS POWER PRISM, MAY BE ENOUGH TO SUFFOCATE ME...IN SILENCE."

KRAK

HARD TO BELIEVE
--BUT
YOU REALLY
ARE
AS STUPID
AS YOU
LOOK!

I CAN WITHSTAND
AN ATOMIC BLAST,
YOU CRETIN! I'M
INVULNERABLE!

IN-VUN--
INV--HULK
DOESN'T CARE
WHAT YOU
ARE/HULK IS
STRONGEST
THERE IS!

MAYBE SO--BUT IT
DOESN'T MATTER!
MY BODY'S IMPREG-
NABLE TO HARM!
YOUR BLOWS CAN'T
HURT ME!

THEN HULK
WILL HURT
YOU
ANOTHER
WAY!

KDOUH-

MY
EARS!

THE HULK SLAMS HIS
MASSIVE PALMS
TOGETHER--JUST
ONCE.

-DUH-WHOM

BUT THE SOUND OF THAT SINGLE CLAP
IS SO DEAFENING--THE SHOCKWAVES
THAT FOLLOW THE SOUND SO POWER-
FUL--THAT NOT ONLY DOES HYPERION
GO REELING...NOT ONLY DOES THE WALL
AT HIS BACK CRUMBLE AND FALL...

...BUT THE VIBRATIONS TRAVEL FOR BLOCKS, SHATTERING WIN- DOWS UP AND DOWN NINTH AVENUE...

...AND SPLINTERING ONE OTHER PIECE OF GLASS AS WELL.

NO!!
THE
PRISM!

STUNNED BY THE SUDDEN DESTRUCTION OF HIS WEAPON, DR. SPECTRUM TRIES TO MAINTAIN HIS BALANCE ON THE QUAKING WALL...

...BUT CANNOT.

HE FALLS...BUT DR. STRANGE CALL UPON THE LIGHT OF THE MOONS OF MUNIPPOOR...

...TO SLOW HIS PLUNGE, SO THAT HE LANDS SAFELY, IF NOT SOFTLY, ON THE BACK OF HIS ALLEGEDLY INVULNERABLE CONFEDERATE.

A MOMENT LATER, VAL REJOINS THE OTHERS ON THE STREET...

I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL...I WISHED TO BE CERTAIN KYLE WAS UNHARMED BEFORE...

NO NEED TO EXPLAIN FURTHER, VAL. I UNDERSTAND.

DO YOU, STEPHEN? TRULY? FOR I DO NOT. ALL MY INSTINCTS CALLED ME TO BATTLE... AND YET I FELT COMPELLED TO...

AND SO AM I. BUT WHEN MY WIFE HEARS WHAT SHE MISSED....!

WHY DOES GIRL SOUND SAD? HULK AND FRIENDS BEAT SINISTERS--EVEN INVULNERABLE ONE! GIRL SHOULD BE HAPPY!

I AM, MY FRIEND... I AM.

SOME WEEKS LATER. A STROLL DOWN PARK AVENUE IN THE GLOW OF THE NIGHT.

TRISH, YOU CAN'T LEAVE NEW YORK. YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME. I'M NO GOOD WITH WORDS, BUT...

SHALL I PLAY PIANO FOR YOU, KYLE? - OR WOULD YOU PREFER FLUTE? - OR MAYBE YOU'D LIKE ME TO PAINT YOUR PORTRAIT?

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

PART OF ME IS GONE, KYLE. PART OF WHO I WAS. I'M NOT THE PERSON YOU USED TO KNOW. OH, I CAN IMAGINE WHAT YOU'RE FEELING AND WHAT YOU MISTAKE IT FOR...

